

## Spirituality Policy

### Vision Statement

*'Together we strive for excellence, inspired by the joy of the Gospel'.*

### Introduction:

In contrast to other school policies for specific curriculum areas, this policy relates to the whole life of the school. It is promoted through all the subjects of the curriculum; it reflects our approach to teaching and learning; and its promotion is influenced by the quality of relationships and the experiences of prayer and worship. Spiritual development is intrinsically linked with moral, social and cultural development.

### Rationale:

The educational mission of the Church is rooted in Christ's mission..'*that all may have life and have it to the full*'... (John 10:10). This involves the ongoing development of the entire potential of each individual made in the likeness of God and finding fulfilment in God alone.

Spiritual development is at the heart of Catholic education and therefore at the heart of our school: being called to nurture the human wholeness of all our children calls us to ensure that we develop all aspects of our children.

### Definition of Spiritual Development:

At St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas, we believe that spiritual development is a significant aspect of educating 'the whole child'. It relates to the search for meaning and purpose in our existence in God. It is associated with feelings and emotions, and attitudes and beliefs. It is accessible to everyone and is rooted in our Catholic Christian faith.

### At St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas our aims of Spiritual Development are:

- The ability to listen and be still
- The ability to sense the sacred, the holy, our God
- The ability to sense wonder and mystery
- The ability to sense the special nature of human relationships
- The ability to reflect and to appreciate beauty

### We want our children to:

- To develop the skill of being physically still, yet alert
- To develop the ability to use all of ones senses
- To consider the mystery of God, to relate to the person of Jesus and the wonder of God's world

- To find an inner self confidence and peace
- To develop in individuals a self-confidence to express inner thoughts in a variety of ways
- To encourage quiet reflection during a lesson or assembly
- To promote an awareness of and enjoyment in using one's imagination and creativity
- To promote the ability to form good relationships with others

### **Opportunities for Spiritual Development:**

Staff will provide a role model to children by sharing in the joy of discovery and in the wonder of creation. Our enthusiasm for education that truly nurtures human wholeness will be significant in creating the appropriate ethos for the human spirit to thrive.

#### **1. Within the curriculum, children will be able to explore:**

- An imaginative approach to God's world
- A spirit of enquiry and open-mindedness
- A recognition of the presence of God everywhere

#### **2. Opportunities will be provided for children to:**

- Express their creativity and imagination
- Foster a sense of respect for the integrity of each person
- Engage in an atmosphere that encourages them to talk freely about their feelings and beliefs
- Experience a variety of formal, informal and spontaneous prayer, meditation and retreats
- Experience awe and wonder, excitement and enjoyment
- Understand human feelings and emotions
- Experience, silence, stillness and reflection and to learn from reflection
- Experience and appreciate a range of music, art, literature, designed to 'lift the spirit'
- Participate, as appropriate, in the life of our parish community

### **Practice**

Developing each person's spirituality is the responsibility of the whole school community. Spiritual Development is made through the planned and hidden curriculum. In other words, at St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas we address spirituality both explicitly and implicitly.

We address spirituality explicitly through:

- the teaching of '*Come and See*'
- PSHE
- Circle time
- Questioning and exploring the meaning of experience
- Collective Worship and assemblies
- Cross-curricular approaches where appropriate
- Drama

- Music
- Reflections
- Liturgical celebrations
- Regularly planned Mass celebrations
- Residential visits and day visits
- the teaching of other Faiths